

August 31, 2020

CONTACT:

Nick Kor

Senior Manager for Movement Building, CAAL

651-353-8845

nick@caalmn.org

STATEMENT:

Asian American Organizations in MN Respond to MN GOP Chairwoman on "China Virus"

On Tuesday, August 25th, the Republican Party of Minnesota Chairwoman, Jennifer Carnahan, was asked by KARE 11 about the president's use of the terms, "China Virus," "Wuhan Virus," or "Kung Flu." She responded, "our Caucus does not find any of the statements by the president to be offensive." As organizations that represent many different Asian American communities in Minnesota, we are appalled at the Chairwoman's endorsement of this language and disappointed that she does not find the statements to be offensive. This type of language used by the president of the United States and the Chairwoman of the Republican Party of Minnesota is deeply harmful to Asian American communities in Minnesota and furthers divisiveness when we should be working together to end this pandemic.

Like all Americans, Asian Americans are experiencing the daily pain that COVID-19 has had on the health and economic well-being of our communities. On top of all this, we have seen a rise in anti-Asian racism against many of our communities across the United States, including Minnesota. In one incident recently, a young Asian couple in Minnesota came home to a note on their door saying, "We're watching you. Take the Chinese virus back to China. We don't want you here infecting us with your diseases! Signed, your friendly neighborhood." The labels "China Virus," "Wuhan Virus," or "Kung Flu" exacerbate this racism and invite the general public to blame anyone who is perceived to be Chinese for causing this pandemic. The continued broadcasting of these terms through the megaphone of the president and the MN GOP Chairwoman furthers the harm towards Asian American communities in Minnesota. This must stop immediately.

The reality is that there have been failures at all levels of government to address the needs of our communities at this time. Instead of excusing language and shifting blame onto everyday Asian Americans who are trying to survive this deadly pandemic, the Chairwoman should be working within her party to understand the harm that has directly impacted Asian Americans at this time. We urge her to not make excuses for racism and ask that she work with her party and all levels of government to bring our communities together so that support and aid reaches all those in need. Chair Carnahan needs to denounce the president's offensive comments, clearly state that Chinese and Asian communities are not to blame for the pandemic, and get to work to help solve this crisis.

Signed,

Asian American Organizing Project (AAOP)

Asian Media Access

CAPI USA

Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL)

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Twin Cities Chapter

Filipinx for Immigrant Rights & Racial Justice MN (FIRM)

Hawj United of Minnesota

Hmong 18 Council of Minnesota

Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA)

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) - St. Cloud Chapter

Philippine Study Group of Minnesota

Release MN 8

Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)

SEWA-AIFW

TaikoArts Midwest

Theater Mu

Vietnamese Social Services

Transforming Generations